

# CURRENT TOPICS

PRESIDENT TAFT was, by inference at least bitterly assailed in a speech delivered in the senate by Senator Bourne of Washington, who is a progressive. The Associated Press report says: "The surprising thing was that although all of the senator's audience construed his remarks as an attack on the president, not a word was uttered in reply. The Beverly letter, in which Secretary Norton said the president had withheld federal patronage from certain congressmen and senators, but would discontinue that practice, was brought into the limelight. On previous occasions insurgent senators threatened to read this letter in the senate, but until tonight no public reference had been made to it. Mr. Bourne opened his speech by a discussion of the Oregon law. He said when this law is enlisted by all the states it will destroy the power of the federal machine to renominate a president or determine his successor. The 'steam roller,' he says, will be relegated to the political scrap heap and its operators to the shadow of things forgotten, while fourth-class postmasters will cease to be a political asset for anybody or any party. Senator Bourne said the use of presidential appointing power to coerce members of congress would be either bribery or intimidation—bribery patronage if used as a reward and intimidation if withheld as a punishment. In this connection he read section 5450 of the revised statutes, making it a crime for any person to offer or receive anything of value to any member of either house of congress with intent to influence his vote or decision upon any matter pending in either house. Continuing, he said: 'The natural inference from the Norton letter is that the president of the United States used federal patronage to influence the action of members of congress. This is a charge which no citizen can discuss without regret, yet the whole subject is of such vital importance in the preservation of representative government that I would feel remiss in my duty if I failed to call it to the attention of the country and place in a valuable form such information relating thereto as may come to my attention. The undenied statement indicates a deplorable and deprecable subservience on a dangerous and demoralizing usurpation on the part of the executive. I would have as much respect for a common ward heeler who buys votes at the polls, as for a president of the United States who uses his appointing power as a means of persuading members of congress to determine their course of action.'"

NOT CONTENT with its unhappy experience in the proceeding against the editor of the Appeal to Reason, the Taft administration has gone after another editor. The Denver News says: "Urban Walter, editor of a Denver publication, the Harpoon, was arrested yesterday by a United States deputy marshal on complaint of Postoffice Inspector Waters. He is charged with violating the postal laws in sending 'scurrilous' matter through the mails. Postoffice Inspector-in-Charge Cochran ordered the arrest on advices from Washington. Walter is a former mail clerk. He is charged with having mailed 5,500 envelopes, on the outside of which was printed an attack on Postmaster General Hitchcock and a criticism of President Taft. In red letters appeared the following: 'Join the Harpoon's anti-gag crusade.' 'Do you know there are 14,000 dissatisfied men in the railway mail service?'—President of the clerks' organization to Washington officials. 'Very well, we can get 14,000 men'—the reply. Then there were statements affecting Hitchcock and the administration. Conviction on the charge against Walter provides a maximum fine of \$5,000 or imprisonment for five years, or both. Walter gave bond before the United States commissioner to appear March 7 for a hearing."

CLIFFORD SIFTON, former minister of the interior of Canada, does not take kindly to Canadian reciprocity. Speaking to the Associated Press, Mr. Sifton said: "The best years of my life were given to the work of settling the Canadian northwest, and I cannot express my feelings at the prospect of seeing that coun-

try made the back yard of Chicago. What is the reason being given by the representatives of the United States for proffering us the terms they do? I decline to entertain the suggestion that Champ Clark, leader of the democratic party was not speaking seriously of annexation. If it had not been for Mr. Clark and the democratic party this reciprocity agreement never would have passed the house of representatives. It was he who put it through. He says he and his party are in favor of this proposal because it leads to annexation. What did Mr. Taft, leader of the republican party, say? Canada is a strong country, it has a great storehouse of natural resources. He says that it has been pursuing a strong and successful policy of development, but is now at the parting of the ways. Therefore, he says, before Canada is irrevocably fixed in the policy leading to the consolidation and strengthening of the British empire, we must turn her from her course."

THE BRISTOL, TENNESSEE correspondent for the Nashville Tennessean wires his paper the following: "That William Jennings Bryan, who visited Bristol, enjoys more popularity in Virginia than in any other southern state, was the opinion of several prominent Virginians who came here and joined the Tennesseans in welcoming Mr. Bryan. Ex-Governor J. Hoge Tyler of Virginia, came to hear Mr. Bryan, and in an interview stated that he believed him to be not only the greatest living American, but the greatest man in the world. At the banquet given Mr. Bryan, Judge John W. Price, a prominent Virginian, told of an incident that demonstrated the strong attachment of the people of Virginia for Bryan, whose father, the late Silas Bryan, was born in Culpepper county, Va. In the history of Virginia there was probably never a more popular or powerful democratic leader than the late Senator John W. Daniel. At the last democratic state convention, held at Roanoke, Major Daniel went there to stem the tide for Bryan, and prevent the convention from sending to the national convention at Denver a delegation instructed for the Nebraskan for the presidential nomination. Major Daniel employed his great eloquence and power of persuasion in an effort to induce the convention to send an uninstructed delegation, but the demand for Bryan was too strong. Daniel wanted to go to the convention as a delegate, but the convention of 2,000 Virginians would not permit him to go uninstructed. Though they elected him to the senate for five consecutive terms, they would not trust his judgment at the national convention, but adopted iron-clad instructions for the delegates to vote for Bryan so long as his name was before the convention."

AN EFFORT is being made to reorganize the democratic party in Pennsylvania. An Associated Press dispatch, under date of Harrisburg, March 2d, says: "A complete reorganization of the democratic party in this state was decided on by the committee here tonight, when the report of the committee of reform democrats was adopted by a vote of forty to thirty-nine. Members of the democratic party organization say the plan can not be carried out under the present party rules. All except five members of the state committee were present in person or by proxy at the meeting, which had been called by State Chairman Dewalt. National Committeeman James M. Guffey did not attend the meeting. He said his position could not be affected until the election of the delegation to the national convention in 1912. The report, adopted after efforts had been made to secure the adoption of a substitute resolution naming another committee declares that reorganization can not be effected except by a 'complete change in leadership, in methods and in policies which the election returns in November last demanded,' and recommends that a committee of seven persons be selected with power to elect a new chairman of the state committee and a new member of the national committee. When the reading of the report had been concluded, Walter E. Retter of Lycoming county moved that the rec-

ommendations be stricken out and a substitute providing for the appointment of a new committee. This was defeated thirty-nine to forty-two after a three-hour debate, in which State Chairman Dewalt left the chair and spoke in his own defense and in favor of the substitute report. After the original report, with its recommendations, had been accepted, Chairman Dewalt announced that he would appoint three members of the proposed committee within a few days. The committee on reorganization said they would make their appointments shortly and the congressional delegation is expected to meet tomorrow to select the seventh member."

SENATOR CUMMINS of Iowa, is doing some strange things these days. Not long ago he shocked many who were inclined to admire him by saying that so far as he was concerned any republican was better than the best democrat. Now he is fighting reciprocity. The Denver News says: "Senator Cummins of Iowa will do himself and the cause of insurgency no good by helping kill the reciprocity agreement in the present congress. He will, likewise, do reciprocity no harm. President Taft is sure to call an extra session; and that extra session, fresh as it is from the people, is equally sure to endorse the reciprocity agreement now pending, and call for more of the same kind. If Senator Cummins is capable of half the logic we believed him to possess, he knows that his alarm for the future of the American farmer under reciprocity with Canada is purest humbug. The American farmer has to sell his goods in a free trade market, and buy his goods in a tariff-walled market now; and such has been his condition for forty years. You cannot knock holes in the infamous tariff wall, and still keep it intact. You cannot maintain your own pretense of a graft, and get rid of the other fellow's very real graft. If Senator Cummins cannot see that in the distribution of tariff peanuts, the trusts have had the meat and the farmer the shells, we have much overrated his intelligence."

SPEAKING TO A representative of the Omaha (Neb.) News, Rudolph Spreckles, the multimillionaire, who has dedicated his life to reform work, said: "The commission form of government properly protected, is a step in the right direction to solve problems of the government of a city. The initiative and referendum and recall are absolutely necessary to successfully govern by the commission plan. The ideal government of cities is that by men qualified to care for the property of the people, but then the people themselves hold a firm grip on the control of these affairs. Make a few men responsible for the government of your city and give the people every power to enforce their demand for clean, able conduct of municipal affairs. A low per cent for the recall is absolutely necessary. I favor, myself, an eight per cent for the initiative and five per cent for the recall. We tried a high per cent for the recall at San Francisco and got nowhere with it. It is necessary to give the people and all of the people the greatest amount of power in initiating legislation, in checking vicious laws and in recalling officials who do not do their duty if we are to have real government by the people. We have had the initiative and the recall in San Francisco for years, but we could not use them because the percentage had been placed too high. It made it too costly for the people to use."

COMMENTING ON THE result of the Lorimer vote, Mr. Bryan gave the Associated Press this statement: "The result has been foreshadowed for several days. In fact the vote was closer than I expected. It is very creditable to the progressive republicans that so many voted to unseat a man of their own party on the charge of corruption. I am glad that so large a majority of the democratic senators voted to unseat Lorimer and am sorry that our party has to bear the odium of having any democratic senator vote to seat him on the showing that was made."